

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 01637 211440Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 211405Z OCT 75

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1664

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 1 6 3 7

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, CGEN, PINT, SREF, UR

SUBJECT: JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM LENINGRAD

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. LENINGRAD REFUSENIK WITH CLOSE TIES IN
LENINGRAD JEWISH COMMUNITY HAS PROVIDED CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF
EMIGRATION REFUSALS. IT IS GLOOMY PICTURE WHICH, ACCORDING TO
SOURCE, HAS BECOME WORSE IN PAST SIX MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. LENINGRAD REFUSENIKS BELIEVE AUTHORITIES NOW FOLLOWING POLICY
OF NO RPT NO RECONSIDERATIONS OF REFUSALS. SOURCE SAID THAT NO
RPT NO REFUSENIKS OF LONG STANDING HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO DEPART
DURING PAST SIX MONTHS. THUS FAR IN 1975 ABOUT A DOZEN REFUSENIK
FAMILIES SUBMITTED THEIR EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS FOR SECOND OR
THIRD TIME AND ALL RECEIVED NEW REFUSALS. AS FOR NEW APPLICATIONS,
SOURCE SAID THAT 37 FAMILIES FROM LENINGRAD HAVE RECEIVED FIRST
REFUSALS DURING 1975 AND THIS GROUP REPRESENTS FROM 40 O/O
OF TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT LENINGRAD REFUSENIKS. IN OTHER WORDS,
REFUSENIK RANKS ARE INCREASING IN ABSOLUTE TERMS AS OLDER CASES
RECEIVE CORROBORATING REFUSALS AND NEW APPLICANTS RECEIVE
INITIAL TURNDOWNS.

3. SOURCE BASICALLY CONSIDERS THAT AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED
TO STOP OR REDUCE GREATLY NUMBER OF SELECTIVE RECONSIDERATIONS,
ALL THE WHILE INCREASING REAL AND SUBTLE INTIMIDATION. LENINGRAD
REFUSENIKS POINT TO TRIALS IN MOSCOW AND KIEV OF YOUNG MEN WHO
REFUSED MILITARY SERVICE JUST AFTER BEING TURNED DOWN ON THEIR
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APPLICATIONS TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. SOURCE BELIEVES AUTHORITIES

STRIVING PARTICULARLY TO CREATE SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT TO EMIGRATE SINCE THEY FACE EXPULSION FROM INSTITUTES, ETC. WHEN THEY HAND IN THEIR APPLICATIONS FOR EMIGRATION AND, IN CASE OF REFUSAL, THEN FACE CALL TO MILITARY SERVICE. FEELING IS THAT PENALTIES FOR PARTICIPATING IN DEMONSTRATIONS NOW SIGNIFICANTLY HARSHER THAN BEFORE AND, AS CONSEQUENCE, JEWISH ACTIVISTS ARE BEING MORE CAREFUL.

4. COMMENT: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT REFUSENIK COMMUNITY IN LENINGRAD IS INDEED INTIMIDATED BY HARD LINE OF CONSISTENT REFUSALS. IN COMPARISON WITH MOSCOW REFUSENIK COMMUNITY, LENINGRAD GROUP SENSES RELATIVE ISOLATION FROM WIDER ACTIVIST AND DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES AND, AS WELL, DOES NOT HAVE ON THE SPOT OPTION OF INTERACTING WITH RESIDENT FOREIGN PRESS. FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CERTAINLY STILL TIES BETWEEN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD REFUSENIK CIRCLES, THE TREND HERE APPEARS TO BE TOWARD LESS ACTIVISM--IN LENINGRAD ITSELF--AND LESS WILLINGNESS IN GENERAL TO APPEAR TOO PROMINENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE AMONG REFUSENIKS WHO STILL WANT ABOVE ALL TO EMIGRATE AND, IN ASSESSING FUTURE PROSPECTS, BELIEVE A PATH OF NOT ROCKING THE BOAT MAY HOLD GREATER HOPE THAN AN ACTIVIST APPROACH. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH POLOFF CONTINUES TO HAVE ENTREE IN REFUSENIK CIRCLES, SOME LONG-STANDING REFUSAL CASES NOW PREFER TO PASS INFORMATION ON STATUS OF LENINGRAD EMIGRATION THROUGH HIS WIFE, AS A "SAFER" MIDDLE-MAN. ONE 1974 REFUSAL CASE JUST RECENTLY RECEIVED HIS SECOND REFUSAL AND CONCLUDED, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT A VERY LOW PROFILE OFFERS BEST CHANCE FOR MAKING IT THE THIRD TIME AROUND WHEN HE REAPPLIES NEXT YEAR.

5. POLOFF HAS RECEIVED CURRENT LIST OF LENINGRAD REFUSENIKS, NOW UP TO 86 CASES (INCLUDING FAMILIES AND SINGLE INDIVIDUALS). CONGEN WILL POUCH COPIES TO EMBASSY AND EUR/SOV FOLLOWING CONFIRMATION OF SEVERAL RECENT REFUSALS.

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